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PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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THE NEW TESTAMENT THEORY OF EVOLUTION.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."—1 John iii. 2, 3.

There is the most striking contrast between the spirit of modern scientific thought in regard to man, and the spirit of the New Testament; and nowhere is this found more than in the views which are taken of the nature of man. Science tends almost entirely, just now, to think of man as he was. The New Testament thinks of him as he is to be. The spirit of the one and that of the other are not necessarily antagonistic. These two ways of looking backward and forward may be only complements of each other; but at present one is seeking very diligently the origin, and the other has descried the destiny, of man. The one is looking for man's physical genesis, and the other has pointed out his spiritual regenesis. The one looks at the planting of the seed: the other follows, with the same eye, the flower and the consummate fruit which that seed is to bring forth.

There are, therefore, heard two voices crying aloud. One says, "Man is of the dust;" and the other says, "Man is immortal." One declares, "Man is derived from the animal;" the other says, "Man is the son of God." One says, "We came from beneath, by long ascension, to our present place;" the other says, "We ascend; and it doth not yet appear to what heights of glory."

SUNDAY MORNING, October 5, 1873. LESSON: Col. i. 1-22. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 199, 725, 497.

Though these are not necessarily in conflict, they are made to be so, unwisely and unskillfully.

It is of great use, certainly, to know of man's origin; and a true philosophy will undoubtedly clear many abstractions from the way of men's thoughts; but it is transcendently more important to know one's destiny. It is well to know what man came from: it is far better to know what he is going to. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be"; but *now*, even, we know that "we are the sons of God." What the amplitude of the meaning of that is we cannot tell, the apostle says; and if the apostle could not discern the scenes that lay beyond the vail, certainly we shall not be able to do so.

The fundamental and universal fact derived from observation and experience is the physical and animal condition of the race, as a primary one. There are two theories: one, that man fell from a much higher estate to this low and rude one; and another that man came from a low and rude beginning, and has been working toward a higher condition. Either theory comes to the same thing, as to the matter of treatment. The first man may have fallen. His posterity could not very well fall, for they began at the bottom. They were there. And any change, as men are born into life, must be a change upward.

But this matters little. The New Testament does not look back. It but glances in that direction. There are only the merest hints—hints on the way to something else.

The New Testament has two sights, as we should say speaking of firearms; the present is the hind-sight, and the fore-sight is the future. It assumes things as they are, and then goes on to things as they are to be. The whole spirit of the New Testament is a spirit of going forward. It holds the present to be important only in the light of the future. It assumes, as from history and from philosophy, that man comprehensively *is* low and erring and sinful. Now, it is worse than folly to undertake to say whether this means total depravity, whether it means Adamic depravity, or whether it means depravity at all. The fact remains that men are universally so low and so sinful that they need divine interposition; that they need some other unfolding

than that which comes by the forces of ordinary nature; that they need divine succor and divine help to lift themselves up out of this low, sordid, animal condition, into that state in which they can call themselves, with any considerable degree of spiritual consciousness of the fact, sons of God.

That man is susceptible of gradual change, and, in the divine providence, of an unfolding which we call civilization, and of which centuries are the term, all know, and all admit; but can that unfolding be accelerated? Can it be in part induced by man himself? Is there in nature a new development-theory of the spirit? That is the present question. That is precisely the ground which the New Testament takes. It does not ignore, it certainly does not argue against, the gradual unfolding which takes place by the visible process of nature; but it does declare that there is introduced into this economy a new disclosure by which, under the influence of the divine Spirit, whatever is low in man may be lifted up; by which whatever is dull and of the flesh may be spiritualized; by which whatever could not come together except through long ages of development (if it came together at all, which is a matter of more than doubt) may come speedily together.

There is a doctrine, in other words, of a new birth in Christ Jesus. By the power of the Holy Ghost men are transformed, inspired, and brought into a state in which it is not mockery when they are called sons of God. So that it is the avowed opening of this new kingdom of influences, it is the direct inspiration of the human soul by divine contact, that constitutes the peculiar operative element of the New Testament.

We are not to suppose that this is revealed as absolutely new truth; for one might conceive of sporadic cases as occurring before there was any known impulse of this divine influence exerted upon the human consciousness. The two-leafed gates seem to have been thrown wide open before there was this knowledge, or where it was but in twilight. The Sun of righteousness arose in Christ Jesus: and this truth of the juncture of God's nature with man; this truth of such an inspiration by the Spirit of God that men are lifted high when it has its action upon them—this is a transcendent revelation of the

New Testament, so far as man is concerned. The human race was joined to the Lord Jesus Christ by his incarnation. Not that he was thought to be so worthy that as a reward God gave him the race, as it used to be said; but our relationships to God as those of children to a father were so disclosed through him, through his life, through his suffering, through his death, as to become potential upon the race forevermore.

The truth that the holy spirit of God, acting upon the human soul, develops it in all those qualities which are farthest from the animal and nearest to God is that one truth of the New Testament which inspires the most activity, the most rational hope, and the most practical development of Christian efficiency. For while we do not undervalue those causative influences which take hold upon the individual, and at large upon society; while we behold, as it were, secondary influences at work, through the family state, through the community generally, and through all industrial avocations; while we feel that the providence of God includes all the social framework; while we regard man's interest in man, in some sense as a means of grace, yet the central and distinctive principle of the New Testament is that over and above it is the down-thrusting power of God, and that that power, acting in the human soul, kindles the imagination, fires the reason, creates a moral enthusiasm, and gives to the latent or undeveloped resources in man power by which he becomes a son of God in disclosure, as he was before potential in his undeveloped condition. We are not to exclude secondary and natural influences; but there is, over and above these, as their consummation, a distinctive power, a direct approach of the soul to God as a Being present and consciously near to us.

This is the true doctrine of the New Testament. It is a doctrine which cannot be tested by weights, by measures, by the alembic, by scales; nor will it be destroyed by remote analogies. It is a fact of consciousness; and facts of consciousness are as much facts as any other facts of nature—as facts of turnips, of potatoes, of pumpkins, or of onions. Men seem to think that that is nature which is farthest from God—that

trees are nature, that soil is nature, that electricity is nature, and that attraction of gravitation is nature; but that imagination, reason, inspiration, and moral consciousness, which are the highest reach to which creative force has carried the race—that these belong to nature, men do not believe. These are not, they say, "scientific."

Now, I aver that nature, beginning with the clod, ends with man—no, not with man: it goes higher than that; for man, as ordinarily contemplated, is the physical body composed of bone, blood, muscle, and nerves; but the man that God is looking upon is a son of God, nascent, increscent, evermore developing. And I aver that the upper forms of nature are more nature than the lower forms, if so I may speak. That is to say, the reality of the invisible connected with man is a more stubborn and philosophical and rational reality than the reality of man in the body, and connected with the terraqueous globe.

Science is doing its good work outside of the Bible, in detailing anthropology as it is seen and heard with external eyes and ears; while revelation discloses anthropology as it is seen with the inside eyes, and revealed to the spiritual understanding. By-and-by, when the centuries have rolled clear over, that side which is now opposite the sun, and groping in the dark, will be turned round, and man will recognize this higher disclosure of human nature, its approaches to the divine Spirit, and its dependence thereupon.

The fruits of the Spirit are very beautiful, even as we now contemplate them—though I think we have seldom seen any ripe ones. You will find in Galatians that familiar passage—familiar to anybody who has heard me preach for the last three or four years, at any rate—which contains the inventory of the fruits of the spirit—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." These, however, are only specimens. As one goes into a garden and brings out a bouquet, and yet does not pretend to take everything that is in the garden, but only enough to represent what is there; so these fruits of the spirit do nothing more than suggest the multitude of those that exist. For what do we know of love? You will say, "If there is anything of which

we have a knowledge it is love. We who were born in Christian households; we whose earliest remembrance is of looking into the face of father and mother; we whose features take unconsciously the lineaments of our parents; we who saw their watchings; we who saw how much they gave up for our sake; we who saw how sweet was their approbation, and how reluctant was their censure; we who saw their life, which was woven of the silver and golden threads of affection—we know about love. Then, we have seen the rapture of the young lover. We have seen how love triumphed over death itself. The noblest gems which history wears are those which love has disclosed; and if we know about anything, we know about love." And yet we know nothing about it. We know as much about love as a child knows about a diamond that it has seen in the rough, but that it has never seen ground, with its facets flashing light in every direction. We know as much of love as men know of gold who have seen it in the quartz, and discerned the difference between it and the quartz, but who have not seen it in its pure state. We have never seen love in such a sense that it dominated everything, in one man, in a single household, in a whole neighborhood of households, in an entire town or city, everywhere regnant, so that the human mind threw out all the radiant glories of disinterested and true affection; so that justice took on the garments of love; so that truth clothed itself in love; so that all forms of suffering were enshrined in love; so that everything wore its colors, and was true to its allegiance. We have here and there seen it as golden particles in sand; but we have seldom seen it as nuggets of gold; we have never seen it in its amplitude, as one complete golden orb, governing all things, and harmonizing all things.

But if it be so with love, which is, perhaps, next to hate, the strongest feeling in the world; if it be true that we know so little of love, which is so strong and triumphant, how much do we know of joy? A good deal of a kind of rough, bouncing, boyhood joy; but how much of joy as a garment which one wears, shining like silver, ruddy and radiant as gold? Who knows what joy is, as an abiding state of mind, such

that it is by day and by night in him uttering itself in all sweetness and all melody? Men see joy flash; they see it sparkle; they know what it is as an intermittent, limited experience; but who knows it in its sweet majesty and power?

Shall he who has only heard a half-tuned instrument played say that he knows what is the glory and power of music? and shall he who has only seen a moral quality in a discordant heart, in a half-tuned human soul, say that he knows what it is? I think thus of Christian graces. I have seen graces that were like music on a clarionet, with a learner at the other end of it; I have seen graces that were like music on a violin out of which were drawn notes that Paganini would never recognize; I have seen all manner of Christian graces produced on one-stringed instruments and two-stringed instruments, but they were in a discordant, untuned, undisciplined state, so that they conveyed no conception of the glory and power of the reality of this quality of joy.

Now take on the other hand the idea of various culture, drilled, disciplined, infinitely fruitful—Love, coupled, as it would be, of course, with joy, radiant, as on some bright June morning the sun itself is, which, while shining in amplitude through the heaven, is also sparkling in every single dew-drop on a million blades of grass, and on thrice ten million leaves, every one carrying its little sun—like God's nature, bountiful in universality, yet special in each individual experience; who has known of joy in any such way as that? If there be any here who have known such joy, let them speak. But in all the world there never was one such—nay, not even the perfect Man; for it was "for the joy that was set *before* him" that he "endured the cross, despising the shame."

If it be so of love and joy, how much more is it so of of peace! The ignominiousness of our conception of peace is shown in this—that it is supposed to be merely *absence of suffering.* Sleep is supposed to be peace-bearing. Then annihilation is peace; for sleep is, substantially, annihilation. What do men, after all, know of that higher moral state, of that consummate condition of the soul, which consists in the harmonization, the equalization of every faculty, each one keyed to wholesome excitement—to that

point or pitch where it is not affected by mundane influences? The consciousness of living in a higher ether; the consciousness of God's presence; the consciousness of being lifted above fear and envy and jealousy; the consciousness of the full activity of all the feelings, and yet, of their being so harmonized together that the soul is carried up into perfect tranquility, there never being so much of one's self as when he is in that higher altitude—who knows of these things? We see glimpses of them in enthusiasts, in saints whose lives are written; we read of men who had this deep peace; and we smile and think that what they thought were experiences must have been dreams. No, they were realities. Subtle, ethereal, hard to touch, difficult to analyze, and well nigh impossible to believe in, were they: but many of the most substantial realities of the world are the very highest experiences which men have.

"Long-suffering." There is a great deal of suffering, but very little *long*-suffering. "Gentleness." There is a great deal of weakness in the world; but that is not gentleness. Soft touches, when a man cannot touch in any other way than softly, are not gentleness. Gentleness is power, intensity, vigor. Power made soft by the sweetness of love is gentleness. "Goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"—how little does any one know in respect to these!

Now, if this is fact, we see why it is that none of us know our sonship to God in this world. Our relationship and likeness to him are to be disclosed in those elements which here are in their seed-form, or in the form of grafts loosely joined to the stock. We have not yet come to such a state of amplitude that we recognize ourselves in our higher nature, in the power of it, in its range, in its height, in its depth, in its length, in its breadth, in the fruitfulness of its continuing and familiar experiences. It doth not yet appear what we shall be as sons of God, when we rise to our higher moods, and come into possession of the great possibilities of the human mind.

Here we have the Christian conception of manhood. Christianity does not concern itself with the origin of things. Leaving that to those who look simply with the eye of physical

consciousness, it takes man as he is, declaring that he has within him powers by which he may be lifted above time and secular things—powers of reason, irradiated, stimulated, and inspired of God, which lift him into the sphere of that new and higher life in which he is a son of God. In a general and loose sense, he is a son of God always; but there are elements of his being, such that when he is brought into the divine relationship he is by the spirit of God lifted into a full and blessed consciousness of his moral status. When one has once come to that high consciousness, he has gained a victory over the world, not in the sense that there are no further liabilities or imperfections, not in the sense that hereafter everything is to be completely rounded out, but in a yet higher sense. He has a new view of life and of destiny, a new idea of ambition, a new sphere of activity. He has overcome the world, in that he is no longer of it, though he is in it; and he feels that his treasure, that everything which belongs to him, is higher than the tides of time, or than the atmosphere of the world. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be" when all these intimations and buddings and beginnings come forth in the heavenly land.

I brought with me, when I came from the White Mountains, a week ago, specimens of what is going on in nature there—sprigs containing brilliant leaves of the scarlet maple. I also brought down golden leaves, and mottled leaves, and bronzed leaves, in colors so intense that a painter's palette would blush with shame for its own incompetency. I took them out, and laid them down, and said, "Here are specimens of what I have brought you from the mountains." But would anybody get from these leaves any conception of the vast ranges of the magnificence of the side-hill; of the miles and miles of continued forest; and of the fields and valleys and blushing shrubs, with their gradations and variations of color? Any specification of them which I could make would be utterly inadequate. You cannot look upon the scene as it really exists and realize it. You are overwhelmed by the sight. It surpasses all ordinary experience. In its presence, one seems almost to evaporate and float in the atmosphere of its glorious beauty. And when I bring this handful of leaves

and show them to another, how absurd it is for him to say, "Now I have some idea of what you used to mean when you talked about the Mountains." Poor creature! you have no idea of it.

Our English friends have seen autumnal colors; "O yes," they say, "we have seen them;" but when they have once seen a color-fall in America, when God has drenched the earth in colors such that it seems almost as though they must have come from above, how imperfect do they find their conceptions to have been! Who that ever in autumn went from New York to Albany along the Hudson, and saw on both sides the glory-sheeted magnificence of color which is presented all the way up, could describe the scene?

In short, when nature is teaching us a lesson that we never learn; when nature is emblazoning symbols of religious things that we never take the hint from; when nature comes to die, and displays all her banners, and goes trooping out in the majesty of most glorious aspects—then is she grand beyond the conception of the human soul. No man, be he poet; no man, be he artist; no man, be he ever so learned or skillful or inspired, can describe even matter in color; but if the inward soul, if all the wilderness within man which has been made to bud and blossom as the rose by the Sun of Righteousness; if all the summer of grace as it is brought out in the human being, carried up and made radiant as God and angels see it, with all his self-denial, all his boundless capacity, all his love and meekness and gentleness, in their lights and shades, of every kind—if these, when looked upon and descried by our dull eye, seem to us nothing; if when men look at the descriptions which one gives of these things they say, "You must have a vivid imagination to conceive them," then I say, in the language of Scripture, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." If all the images that belong to kingdoms, and all the images that art can furnish, and all the images that can be drawn from household and pastoral life, and all the images that belong to triumphant experiences—if these, in the day of the making of the revelation of Scripture, were inadequate to set forth the future of

redeemed man, what must be the transcendent development upon which we are entering!

Whatever you may think of the development-theory behind, let me tell you that the development-theory before is worthy of a moment's attention. Transcendently glorious is the outcome, no matter where the income was.

In view of the points which have been faintly suggested by our discourse thus far; in view of this opening of the apostle's thought as to the grandeur of our sonship, which is not yet disclosed, on the way to the majesty and beauty and glory of becoming kings and priests unto God, but which the apostle descries something of, I remark that dying and death ought to assume an entirely different place in our imagination from what they have done in the minds of a great majority of Christians. I do not mean when we come to die; for ninety-nine men in a hundred are not conscious when they come to die. That is not the time for reasoning. Men are changing then. They are letting go. Occasionally there are vivid realizations, but they are rare. Our habitual contemplation of death should be changed from that dark and gloomy aspect to which we have been so largely bred, and our thought of those who have gone out from us through the portals of the grave should be divested of that sadness and melancholy which envelope them. I know it is said that nature will have its way, and that it is not possible to break off readily the associations, the friendships and the affections of life, and not have the soul suffer; and I would not have souls fail to suffer; but I would not have an unhealing wound created by death. I would not have death thought of in such a way that the sufferer should look into the grave for what is not there.

When the disciples went down to the tomb of Christ, what did they see? Him whom they sought as he lay dead? Or, raised by the power of God, did he sit there in the fullness of restored youth and vigor? No. They saw the linen garments and some napkins rolled together and put in one place. And they saw angels whose voices they heard saying, "We know whom ye seek: he is not here."

When mothers go down to look for their children in

Greenwood ; when companions go, in some lonesome hours in which the world goes hard with them, and sit in memory upon the tomb of those who have been so much to them, I would to God that they could look up, and not down. Their dear ones are not in the grave. My children—why, they have never ceased twinkling like stars down upon me from the heaven above ; and though for other reasons I have often been where they are buried, I have never made one purposed visit to their dust. I never shall go to the napkins and the garments which Christ wore after his resurrection, but to Christ himself ; and I shall not look for my children in the dust to which their bodies have gone again. My children—so bright, so full of all promise, so full of sweetness, so full of everything that the heart craved—they rest with God, and my thoughts follow them through the air, and not through the ground. If you are sons of God, never look in the earth for your departed companions. Whatever may be the truth of their origin, let them come gradually, steadily up to manhood through other forms, if you please ; but when they have once reached manhood's estate, never go back again to their lower conditions seeking for them. You and yours, dying, rise.

Do you ever notice the dandelion when it first comes up in the spring, and is nothing but a mat of little, flat and homely leaves lying snugly on the ground ? A few days of summer sun will bring out the plaited bud, nippled in the soil. In a few days more it will lift itself higher, and open its golden circle. It is now born ; and so are our children born to us. Wait yet a few days, and that blossom is shut up. Its beauty is gone. Wait a few days again, and out it comes once more. But now it is an airy globe, white as pearl, and exquisite in form as no compass could score it. An ethereal globe it is. The wind could blow it away. And such are our children. They have gone from us, beautiful to the last. Through all ages they shall live, and bud and blossom. They have been wafted away to the celestial sphere, where they are singing, and shall sing forever and forever. Sons of God are your children, and they are with God.

Whatever may have been our origin, this view of our destiny ought to inspire in us a sense of personal worth. It was

the function of pride to do this. But pride has become cold, and haughty, and full of conceits. Its ordinary operations are to separate men from their fellows, or to lift them above their fellows, or to clothe some with sovereignty. But now, if we are of the household of faith; if we trace our relationship, through moral experience and through moral quality, to the Lord Jesus Christ, our Elder Brother, and if through him we are the children of God, and can say, in sincerity and in truth, "Our Father," then no man lives who may not in that line develop a sense of personal worth that will be of incalculable value to him. The want of suitable pride is one of the curses of men. The race suffers for the want of that sense of character, that sense of dignity, which alone can hold men back from things little and low, and keep them always in the line of things worthy, and which is inspired by a sense of our relationship to God.

This view ought also to be a remedy for that sense of loneliness which falls upon persons who are thrown out of life, or who have never had any rich social relationships. Thousands and tens of thousands of people in society are consciously alone. Now and then a nature unlike those about it is born into a household, and never speaks its inward thoughts, and never declares its innermost feelings. Sometimes persons have by changes been thrown out of society among strangers, or among friends who were no more to them than strangers, and they have had a sense of loneliness. Our Master himself felt it. He said that he was alone; and then, correcting himself, he said that the Father was with him. Our sense of relationship to God, our sense of its reality and glory, is the legitimate correction of that sense of loneliness which men so often feel.

This view ought likewise to overcome that sense of waste and uselessness which is a source of unhappiness to men. There is something sad in the feeling that one has nothing to do. There is something sad in being thrown out of one's regular occupation. Many a man dreads sickness because it will make him a burden upon others. Many a man dreads being thrown out of his trade or profession, or out of that position in society in which he has thriven and been a blessing

to others. Men feel that they are not good for anything any longer under such circumstances. This is especially apt to be the case when persons contemplate old age before they are old. When people get old, they do not usually feel so ; but as they are drawing near to old age, and they perceive the signs and tokens of it, they dread the idea of being old. They dread the thought of being useless or laid aside.

"They also serve who only stand and wait," John Milton said ; but there is something better than that. They are of as much worth whom God is holding in reserve, as those who at the front of battle do the actual fighting. If we are the children of God, and our destiny is influenced, and our affairs are ordered, by a divine providence, then we are not useless, though just now we may not be actively employed.

On unrolling some of the old Egyptian mummies (and the Egyptians were not so handsome, I think, that they needed to take so much pains to transmit their beauty through generation after generation), you will find wheat three thousand years old. The Greek empire has risen and gone ; the Roman empire has risen, and its dust has been blown away, and civilization has developed since the careful attendants rolled up that wheat ; it has lain three thousand years doing nothing but keeping unconscious company with hideous mummies ; and yet, when taken out and planted in a field, it goes to work, and comes right up, and develops a stem, and brings forth fruit, as though it had not taken a wink of sleep. And if wheat will keep as long as that, I am sure that men will. Though they are for years and years wrapped up, as it were, and kept from the soil and from usefulness, yet when God unrolls them, the seed will come out, and its germ will grow again.

Look larger. Do not think of life as in the compass of a pint or a gill. Measure existence on a broad scale. How infinite the space ! how enormous the duration ! how transcendent the capacity which belongs to the human soul ! We are sons of God begun ; and once being inoculated, once being under the divine favor and power, once having tasted the emancipation of God, it matters little whether we wait a week, a month, a year, or ten years. We are going to our home,

and are sure to reach it; and then we shall know as we are known, and shall be satisfied because we shall be like God.

In the convulsions and the scatterings that are taking place in the world; in the business distresses, the bankruptcies, the sudden revolutions which are occurring, the glory, the chiefest treasure, of man, cannot be touched. It is true that a man's relations to his fellows are much rent; it is true that there is a great deal of suffering and sensibility that should be guarded and respected, in these changes which are going on in the conditions of men; but what is the use of being a Christian if you have nothing better than anybody else? What is the use of being rich if you have no money? What is the use of having a million garments if you are not allowed to take one of them out and wear it? What is the use of being a horseman if you cannot use a steed? What is the use of being a hunter if you never draw a rifle?

Here is God's armory and wardrobe; everything that men need is there; and why should not Christians equip themselves for the duties of life, and guard themselves against its evils? Searching after treasures is good, but it should be with higher motives, and with a higher consciousness. Other men's treasures take to themselves wings, and fly away; but a Christian man's treasures ought to have wings of faith so that they shall fly heavenward perpetually. Your treasure should be "where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." And if, when you break down, if, when all that you have been accumulating for twenty years goes to the winds, if, when the earthquake shakes the city, you go shivering and saying, "I am ruined," you might as well have had no Christ to die for you. If, when the dirt falls from you, that ruins you; if, when your garments fall off, you find that there has been nothing to you but soil, or clothes, or money, then the more you are ruined the better it is for the world. Are you ruined—you that Christ thought of in Gethsemane—you around about whom angel bands have been hovering ever since you were born—you whose name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life—you who are waited for and longed for in heaven—you for whom there is laid up palm, and crown, and scepter?

Ah! the loss of things in this world is oftentimes great gain. Have you noticed that frequently, in the abundance of the leaves of summer, both the landscape and the mansion are hidden? Though it is a sad time, and we do not like to see the leaves turn sere; though we dread the coming of the frosts, yet behold, when, in the morning after the frost, every tree is bare, and not a leaf is left, as we look there appears a house that we have not seen all summer. The leaves hid it; but now that the leaves are gone, it rises to our view. And the landscape—the mountains and the distant river—which has so long been obscured, is revealed to us. What a wonderful vision is opened when the leaves fall!

Many and many a man whose prosperity has been like thick foliage before his eyes, could not see his Father's house, had no view of the heavenly Jerusalem nor of the beautiful landscape beyond; but when adversity came and stripped him bare, and people said, "He is gone! he is gone!" he was richer than he ever had been before.

In these thoughts of a Christian manhood, in these aspirations after a higher life, mens hould find their greatest comfort. The truth of God present with us; the certainty that he cares for us, and will not forsake us; the belief that if he is for us no man can be against us; the doctrine that physical and material things are transient—these are the foundation on which a man should build his trust. In the consciousness of these things he walks on the sea at night as Christ walked on the sea at night, and rules the storm as Christ ruled the storm.

Christian brethren, let us take hold of these pillars of our hope. You are the sons of God. It doth not yet appear what you shall be; but when He shall appear you shall be like him. Having these hopes, purify yourselves, and live more by faith, and less by sight; more by the power of God, and less by the power of the world; more by long-suffering, and love, and all those holy conceptions which shall call you from the thrall of the flesh into the emancipation of the spirit, and crown you with eternal rejoicing.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We come boldly to thee, our Father, not because thou hast commanded it, but because our experience hath made it impossible for us to come except as children to a parent. When we look toward thee there are no clouds. We behold no dark ground where thou sittest with overwhelming terrors. We think of thee as thou hast taught us to do when we say, Our Father, which art in heaven. Behind thee is supernal glory, and with thee is all beauty of love and graciousness. We rejoice that we are more and more learning what is the power of love. We rejoice that it carries with it such force. We rejoice that it hath in it such sharpness. We rejoice that it impels so unerringly the justice of God; and that those things on which the world doth ascend, and by which men shall be lifted above their lower conditions, are not unthought of by thee. Everywhere it is thy love that is vindicating truth against error; it is thy love that is marking the broad distinction which exists between good and evil; it is thy love that makes suffering, and that makes joy; and in thy hand are all the powers which are known to us, and doubtless powers which are unknown to us, and are transcendent.

We beseech of thee that we may not be as stones on which fall the rain and the dew of summer, and the winds and storms of winter, and which are still rounded stones without thought or fruit or beauty. We beseech of thee that we may not be as the low creeping grass which is simply food for the cattle that browse it. May we rather be as the vines that evermore grow, striving to ascend toward the sun, and throwing out branches, that they may bring forth fruit. Thou art the vine: may we be thy branches. Grant that we may seek thee evermore, and seem to ourselves to be most near to thee when we bear the fruits that are like thine—the fruits of the spirit.

May thy blessing rest upon every one of us, in those mortal struggles which we are called to wage, and which have come upon us in our selfishness. See how often we are whelmed therein, and swept by its currents, long before we know that we are floating far out to sea. Behold our strife with pride, with vanity, with envies, with jealousies, with all the evil passions; and have compassion upon us. Smite us, that we may not be permitted to sit down and be content with these things. Love us by pain. Love us by such sharp dealing that we shall be aroused out of that which is low and animal, and be brought, though it be by labor-pain and outcry, into that which is truly spiritual and divine. And yet, have compassion upon our weakness. Remember that we are but dust, and pity us, even as a father pitieth his children, so that we may not be destroyed by thy dealings with us; so that thy sharpest providences, to the uttermost work of the Spirit, shall be to the soul as is the fire to the gold which cleanses it, and brings it forth, none lost, but all set free, utterly, from that which is base.

We give to those whom we love the best things; and dost not thou, O thou greater and better Lover, desire to give to us the best things—joy unspeakable and full of glory; peace which passeth all understanding; that manifestation of thyself which the world can-

not perceive? Grant to all thy servants a summer which shall break forth in their souls, so that every one of them may be bringing forth whatsoever is sweet and pleasant to thee, O blessed Father of the summer.

We pray that thou wilt forgive whatever has been amiss in us. We pray that thou wilt help us to repent of everything that we have done which was wrong. And we remember that there are things that go below the horizon which thou forgettest, and which we do not know. We ask, therefore, for the pardon of all our known sins, and for the pardon of all the sins of which we are unconscious. And we beseech of thee that we may be held more and more every day upon that highway, cast up, upon which the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their head. Give us this victory. Give us to walk among men who weep without crying. Give us to walk among men that stoop, borne up by the power of Christ. By the side of men who are cast down, may we be able to stand, not by our own strength, but by the strength of the Lord Jesus which is in us. Raise us above the struggle; and as in the day of battle sometimes the thunder ceases and the voice of music is lifted on the wind, so, in the midst of our varied warfare may there come to our ears such heavenly music as shall give us joy and gladness before the victory, as a token of our triumph. For we shall not be overcome. We shall not be cast away.

Lord Jesus, we have come to thee. Thou knowest that, and our souls know it. We have taken thee to be ours, and have given all that is in us to be thine. But we know our aberration; we know that we often go back again to the world and its evils; but never with satisfaction or profit. And we rejoice in our souls that thou hast laid the hand of possession upon us, and that none shall take us out of thine hand; and that thou wilt yet, through tears, through strifes, through sufferings, through sorrows, through hope, through courage, through love, through joy, through divine inspiration, through every dealing of thy providence, give us the victory; and we pray that we may have the consciousness of it, and seem to ourselves as the Sons of God, though we be far from our Father's kingdom. May we walk as they who have no other heritage.

And we beseech of thee, our Father, that thou wilt help us to these things, not that we may have the enjoying of them, but that they may make us bright, so that we shall reflect light upon others; and make us warm, that others may be warm in our presence. We pray that we may discern thee in order that we may be able to bring down a picture of thee to those who have not faith to discern thee for themselves. Thus make us ministers of Jesus Christ, supplying the great want of the human soul.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon every household. If some are darkened; if the voice of sorrow sounds in any, wilt thou, O Lord, be present there. May all who are pierced know of thy wounded side. May they discern Him who comes bearing the best gifts. Bring near to thy children, the world to come, that their sorrows may not seem so great nor so strange. May they forget those things which are disagreeable in this state, because they behold the grandeur of the realities of the state toward which they are going. Strengthen all

those who are perplexed by the burden of their business. Give consolation to those who are bowed down with sorrow. And we pray that thou wilt grant that all thy servants may be able to take the disciplines of their daily life as tokens that God is dealing with them. May they find themselves superior, on every side, to the earth on which they tread, and to its affairs which bewilder them.

We beseech of thee, O Lord, that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all the strangers who are in our midst. May they cease to feel that they are strangers. May the spirit of the love of Christ unite them to us and us to them, so that there shall be but one brotherhood here. May they find among us a home in Jesus Christ. In prayers and sweet songs of Israel, in faith, and hope and aspiration, may we all be so united, to-day, that they shall not seem to be strangers in a strange land. Sanctify and bless all their desires. And carry, as thou dost love to do, the mercies which they ask for their dear ones whom they have left behind, to their household, wherever it may be. When we love our children or friends, nothing pleases us so much as to have done for them the things which are for their good; and to-day wilt thou please thy servants by doing the things which they wish to have done, especially for those who are near and dear to them. Wilt thou give them tokens and intimations of gracious answers to their prayers in behalf of those for whom they are praying. Some are praying for wandering children; some for children who have stumbled and fallen; some for absent ones; some for such as are not with them in the innermost life, though they are outwardly united to them. And we beseech of thee that the desires of all these, though they be mute and unuttered desires, far within the soul, which they know not how to breathe to men nor even to speak unto God, may not go unanswered. Listen to them, we beseech of thee, in thy great mercy.

We pray that thy blessing may rest upon all thy churches. May this day be a day of great power among thy people. We pray that thou wilt give light where there is twilight, and that thou wilt purge away the darkness where there is error. Unite thy people more and more in things in which they agree.

Be pleased, O Lord, to remember that assemblage of thy people which is gathered from across the sea,* and from every part of the earth, to hold counsel together. We pray that their thoughts may not be so sharp that again thou shalt be crowned with thorns. May their thoughts of love twine for thee that crown which thou shalt wear in victory at last. May they strive to please thee by that unity which thou didst promise to bring to pass in all the earth.

O thou that dost hide thyself, how thou dost also hide thine hand! We cannot understand thee. Why doth the earth wait so long? Why do the myriad generations that march in, march out again? Why is there such darkness and ignorance? Thou knowest; and yet one day we shall know, but not now; and we hide our eyes from the sight. The whole creation yet groans and travails in pain. Lord, our thought is in that which we behold. We lift ourselves above sight, and in faith believe in thee, and in thy government, and in thy uni-

* Referring to the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in New York.

verse, yet disenthralled and triumphant, and in thy great and glorious future. May none of us fail to be found among those that love thee, and have labored in thy cause. For to have done the least thing will, in the future, seem to us more than now to have founded empires. And may all of us be remembered, who are doing anything for Christ, though it be but giving a cup of cold water to a little child, whether with partial knowledge or in darkness, even as blindly as the roots in spring seek to go toward the light, finding their way through the soil; and may we meet together in that land where we shall see no longer through a glass darkly, but face to face, where we shall know thee as thou art, and where we shall be like thee.

And to thy name shall be the praise, forever and forever, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Bless us, our Father, in our attempt to unfold such truth as may give us an impulse in the right way. May there be some bread for every hungry mouth, and some water for every thirsty lip. May thy truth multiply itself, and spring up, and bring forth fruit an hundred fold in every heart. Help us to sing again to thy praise. Enable us to sing more and more. And as the world grows dim, and strength declines, may our songs become more frequent. May we sing all the way to the border of the river; and may our voice come back from the other side to those who stand and weep for us, that they may know that we are singing still in an everlasting song. And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, shall be the praise. *Amen.*

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